

Message Text

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S/P - MR. KREISBERG

NSC - MR. THORNTON

S/S - SESTEINER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 129541

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM

1. HUGH CORTAZZI, UK DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY, WHO VISITED WASHINGTON THIS WEEK ASKED WHETHER WE HAD ANY POINTS ON NUCLEAR MATTERS WE WOULD LIKE PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN TO RAISE WITH MORARJI DESAI WHEN THE TWO MEET NEXT WEEK IN LONDON. THIS OFFER WAS MADE DURING A USEFUL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH CORTAZZI ON THE INDIAN NUCLEAR SITUATION. WE FILLED THE BRITISH IN ON OUR RECENT EXCHANGES WITH DESAI AND OTHER SENIOR INDIANS ON TARAPUR AND THE BROADER
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QUESTIONS WE WOULD WISH TO DISCUSS IN CONNECTION WITH OUR NON-PROLIFERATION POLICIES. CORTAZZI PASSED ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE UK HIGH COMMISSIONER IN DELHI, WHO HAS EXTENSIVE NUCLEAR BACKGROUND, THAT THE INDIANS MAY BE WILLING TO ACCEPT FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS.

2. WHILE WE THINK THE BRITISH ARE TOO OPTIMISTIC ON THIS

POINT, DESAI'S VIEWS APPEAR TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING ON NUCLEAR MATTERS THAN MRS. GANDHI'S AND LESS DOCTRINAIRE THAN SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS. OUR RECENT EXCHANGES WITH HIM GIVE US GREATER HOPE THAN PREVIOUSLY ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR UPCOMING NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE INDIANS. WE THEREFORE CONCLUDE THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO TAKE UP CORTAZZI'S OFFER AND HAVE ACCORDINGLY ADVISED THE UK EMBASSY HERE THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD REGARD IT AS QUITE HELPFUL WERE THE PRIME MINISTER TO DISCUSS WITH DESAI THE NUCLEAR QUESTION.

3. THE PM MIGHT NOTE THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE U.S. WAS ENCOURAGED BY DESAI'S POSITION ON NUCLEAR MATTERS AND HOPEFUL THAT A WAY COULD BE FOUND CONSISTENT WITH THE PRESIDENT'S APRIL 27 NUCLEAR EXPORT POLICY TO CONTINUE NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH INDIA. SINCE THE TOUGHEST NEGOTIATING PROBLEM WITH THE INDIANS IS LIKELY TO RELATE TO THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, SOMETHING THEY HAVE STEADFASTLY REFUSED IN THE PAST, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL WERE THE PRIME MINISTER TO STRESS TO DESAI HMG'S HOPE THAT INDIA WILL CONCLUDE THAT VOLUNTARY ACCEPTANCE OF THESE SAFEGUARDS WOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH INDIAN INTERESTS. SINCE DESAI PLACES GREAT VALUE ON INDIA'S MORAL LEADERSHIP ROLE, THIS POINT WOULD BE WORTH STRESSING ALONG WITH THE FACT THAT THESE SAFEGUARDS WOULD IN NO WAY IMPAIR INDIA'S ABILITY TO USE NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES, A MATTER OF DEEP CONCERN TO DESAI. RATHER IT SHOULD SIGNIFICANTLY FACILITATE COOPERATION WITH OTHER SUPPLIER COUNTRIES.

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4. EMBASSY LONDON SHOULD FOLLOW UP AS APPROPRIATE. WE ARE REPEATING PERTINENT MESSAGES FOR YOUR INFORMATION. THESE WERE REVIEWED WITH CORTAZZI HERE. THE EMBASSY CAN ALSO TELL THE BRITISH, AS WE HAVE INFORMED CORTAZZI, THAT THE OUTLOOK FOR INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS IS PROMISING. THE PRESIDENT AND DESAI HAVE EXCHANGED WARM SUBSTANTIVE LETTERS AND SECRETARY VANCE HAD A FRIENDLY MEETING WITH THE NEW INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER DURING THE RECENT CIEC SESSION IN PARIS. VANCE

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